/279 cont./

755 The Indians have been seen digging up a wide and deep yard
756 under the orders of the pajé, in order to uncover the cigar buried there and cause of the sicknesses, and which the pajé will make appear at the opportune moment. On a certain occasion a pajé ordered, and was faithfully obeyed, that the whole floor of the maloca be dug up and replaced with other soil, in order to stop the sicknesses of the maloca.

756 4) /sic: h)/ His position.

With the pajé enjoying the maximum influence (30),

> 30. Several Indians, after their confidence had been gained, told us that they did not like, but only feared and, at times, hated the pajé. Ordinarily, however, out of fear of the pajé's vengeance, they are silent when questioned about him, about his curing processes, etc.

because, according to the belief of the natives, the life or death of the people, from his and from other tribes, as well as the storms /280/ and all of nature, depends on him, it is understandable that his position is privileged. Although lacking political power, the tuxáua himself and the entire population respect him and fear him (31).

> 31. Padre Antonio Giacone confirms it -- "By the authority that he enjoys among the Indians and by the fear that all have of his fatal blowings, he becomes extremely proud and conceited, some even reaching the point of being nicknamed Uáque bukque, old God" (o.c. 38).

They fear him even after death, because his spirit is also able to do harm. In Iauareté they asked the Missionary not to bury the pajé in the common cemetery, "because he will frighten our little children" buried there. A Montfortian

[766]
[797]

6: Moser and Tayler E.N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

partly explained by the environment in which they live – has resulted in the small unconnected settlements typical of the Indians of this region.

A headman is responsible for the provision and organization of the household. He arranges the building of the great *malocas* when it is necessary to move. He also oversees festivals and councils. In some households his actual power appeared to be slight, and it seemed to us that the average Tukano did more or less exactly as he pleased.

In the event of a headman dying, a festival is normally held in his honour after the burial. A new headman is then elected, usually the eldest son of the chief, though this decision depends on the council of elders of the household.

If the headman is the secular authority, the shaman is responsible as a spiritual one, in that he is always counteracting the influence of the evil spirits. He also cures the sick and diseased and in the event of death names the person responsible, so that revenge may be exacted. Living in a world apart, he keeps somewhat aloof from his fellow tribesmen and to enhance this sense of separation he may wear distinguishing marks.

Tukano families are small, there are seldom more than two or three children. Why more do not survive is difficult to explain, but life in the Amazonian forest is rigorous and the Indian believes that if a child cannot stand hardship at the moment of birth, it will not be able to stand that of later life. The normal custom of washing the new-born child in a stream is sometimes fatal. Moreover, should the child have any blemish or disfiguration – signs of evil to the Indians – it is all too easy for the mother to hold the infant beneath the water till it drowns. Should she have twins, this will also be the fate of the second-born, or it will be left in the forest to die. For to have more than one child at a time is to be like the animals of the forest – a terrible disgrace. In some *malocas* a dearth of children was very noticeable, especially in the lower areas of the river where the *caucheros* had greater influence.

The children assume adult responsibilities at a very early age. When we were waiting in the deserted *maloca* we noticed a small thatched shelter close to the women's entrance. It was bare and empty, and Horacio told us that this was probably a menstrual hut. They were common among the tribes in the Llanos and the women also retired to them during childbirth. Perhaps the Tukano had the same custom, but we learnt no more.

We saw no puberty rites though we did hear of a ceremony called Jurupari[1]. At certain seasons in the year the men leave for the forest to collect baskets full of chrysalises, *mojojoy*. When the women hear the men returning to the *maloca* they run screaming to the nearest plantation. Here they remain while the ceremony takes place, for they believe that the men have brought Jurupari, their god, with them, and if they or their children should see him, they will die. The men play long seven-foot flutes. One of these trumpet-like

[1] Jurupari in fact seems to be '*lingua general*' for god – and is not peculiar to the Tukano.